What is the Ombudsperson?

The Ombudsperson is a confidential, independent, and impartial resource available to resolve student complaints and concerns within the university community. We provide information, advice, referrals and in some cases intervention to resolve disputes.

In addition to working on-on-one with students, the Ombudsperson can also investigate, in an impartial fashion, complaints, and grievances involving members of the University. The Office makes recommendations, where appropriate, for changes in University policies and procedures and promote discussion on institution-wide concerns.

While the mandate of the Office is to serve students, faculty are encouraged to contact the Ombudsperson to discuss, in confidence, any student issue for which they need impartial advice.

When should you refer students to the Ombudsperson?

- When they want to discuss a sensitive issue in confidence
- When they have a conflict with another party and need help in facilitating resolution
- When they have a situation requiring help in communicating/negotiating with faculty, staff, or students
- When they are unsure which policies, procedures, or regulations apply
- When they feel a policy, procedure, or regulation has been unfairly applied to them
- When they have a complaint about an office or service at the University
- When they don't know who to talk to, where to turn or what options are available

The Ombudsperson can help with issues such as:

- Advisor-advisee relations, supervisor-supervisee relations
- Fear of coming forward or of acting to stop unacceptable behaviour
- Abuse of power, unfair treatment
- Help in writing a letter of concern, or help in writing responses or appeals
- Problems with Instructors
- Appeals of withdrawals under extenuating circumstances appeals (WE)
- Issues related to non-academic misconduct and issues related to Academic Integrity
- Grade appeals

The Ombudsperson cannot:

- Order or force any decision to be changed
- Circumvent existing policies or procedures to resolve issues
- Intervene in conflicts with individuals or groups outside the University
- Intervene in any matter covered by a collective agreement between an individual and the University

The Ombudsperson does not act as a lawyer or an advocate, but will work with students and members of the University to ensure that resolution occurs and grievances are heard and addressed.

WEB: www.sfu.ca/ombudsperson, Email: ombuds@sfu.ca, Phone: 778-782-4563